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# ENG 5010-001: Studies in Twentieth-Century American Literature: Poetic "Schools" and "Movements"

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**English 5010.001-- Studies in Twentieth-Century American Literature:  
 Poetic "Schools" and "Movements"**

**Course Description:** We'll begin briefly with the rambling exuberance of Whitman and the precise compression of Dickinson. Then we'll venture into modernists such as Frost, Crane, Eliot, Pound, H.D., Moore, Hughes, Williams and Stevens among others; we'll consider what usefulness movements such as Imagism, Objectivism, Vorticism and Surrealism have in grasping the complexities of modernism. We'll explore the Agrarian and the Confessional poets, the Beat and the New Black poets, the Deep Image and the Black Mountain poets—in short we'll pursue the explosion of poets and poetry in the single century that comes to dominate many of the global perspectives on poetry. We'll read a number of poets and poems but always with questions about their affinities with various schools and movements.

**Course format:** We'll seek a seminar discussion; read as much assigned work as possible before class, but do make a focused effort for those poems or essays that we'll take up in conversation. Feel free to draw upon previous work—independently or formally undertaken—that will illuminate your contributions. I assume some familiarity with poetry as such, but I also encourage you to pursue your responses to readings from your own point of view while remaining open to the "takes" of others.

I'll assign a good number of poems, but I'll hold you accountable for a select few for our consideration in each class. With respect to those, especially, but also to the selections from anthologies for the particular poet at large, explore the following basic questions:

What's my response to this? What do I think and feel about this text? How does the text—the poetics of the language therein—evoke that thought and feeling? What use, privately and/or publicly, might I make of this emerging current between the poem and me? Of what use is this poet to my understanding of other poets, other literature? How do considerations of "school" or "movement" or "manifestoes of poetics" deepen my understanding?

**Course requirements:** Discussion (20%), short essay (3-4 pgs; 20%) and long essay (12-15 pgs, including prospectus and oral presentation, 60%).

**Course texts:**

Donald Allen and George F. Butterick, ed., *The Postmoderns: The New American Poetry Revised*, NY: Grove P, 1982.  
 Dana Gioia, et. al., ed., *Twentieth-Century American Poetics: Poets on the Art of Poetry*, Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2004.  
 Paul Hoover, ed., *Postmodern American Poetry: A Norton Anthology*, NY: W. W. Norton, 1994.  
 Cary Nelson, ed., *Anthology of Modern American Poetry*, NY: Oxford UP, 2000.

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**Course syllabus:**

Read all selections by the poet, but focus on those specified.  
You can also check <http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps> for commentary and background. Further links can be found at this site, and that of the Academy of American Poets, <http://www.poets.org>, which also has links and a useful audio component.

*June*

T 15: Course introduction  
Founding Directions: Expansion and Contraction

The segments of the trip swing open like an orange.  
There is light in there, and mystery and food.  
Come see it. Come not for me but it.  
But if I am still there, grant that we may see each other.

John Ashberry, "Just Walking Around" (1984)

Think of Dickinson boring a hole in the top (or bottom)  
Knifing the pulp in circles, squeezing lonely flesh  
and sucking out juices that lift her tides to heaven.

R 17: In Nelson, Dickinson: #'s 258, 341, 520, 585, 601, 613, 657,  
1129.

Think of Walt ripping it apart, segments all squashed  
splayed out open, seeds squirting into grey beard  
and scent now sight in the rising orange globe.

T 22: In Nelson, Whitman: "One's-Self I Sing," "I Hear America  
Singing," and "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking"

R 24: "What do we mean when we say *modern*?" (lecture)

**Realism, Naturalism and Regionalism:**

In Nelson, Hartmann (21); Johnson (31); Dunbar (37); "We Wear the  
Mask"; Frost, "Mending Wall," [L. Roll] "After Apple-Picking,"  
"Birches."

**Imagism:** Lowell, (44-48); **High Modernism:** Stein (54)

In Gioia, pp. 1-26.

[x. JJJJJ]=Discussion leader: for these poets/poems, be especially sure  
to have read well, be prepared to raise two or three questions of the  
seminar, and don't hesitate to offer your point of view, if you have  
one, even tentatively, on the text.

T 29: **High Modernism (continued):**

In Nelson, Stevens: "Sunday Morning," [A. Crandell]; "The Idea of Order at Key West" and "Of Modern Poetry" [D. French]; Williams (167-170) [B. Bolin]: *The Descent of Winter* [A. Lenaghan]; "Asphodel, That Greeny Flower..." [K. Mitchell]; Pound: (202-218) [R. Pratte]; H.D.: (233-235) [M. Rankin].

In Gioia, pp. 18-81.

July

R 1: **High Modernism (continued):**

In Nelson, Jeffers (244) [J. Milne]; Moore (250) [S. Krukenberg]; Eliot (277) [E. Bevel]:

In Gioia, pp. 82-116.

**Harlem Renaissance:**

In Nelson, Grimke (145); McKay (314) [J. Schroeder]: "America"; Toomer (352) [L. Roll]; Brown (473): "Memphis Blues"; Hughes (502) [M. La Zier]: "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," "Christ in Alabama" and "Let America Be America Again"; Cullen (530): "Heritage."

In Gioia, pp. 146-151.

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T 6: **Continuations... High Modernism (continued):**

In Nelson, Williams (167-170) [B. Bolin]: *The Descent of Winter* [A. Lenaghan]; "Asphodel, That Greeny Flower..." [K. Mitchell]; Pound: (202-218) [R. Pratte].

R 8: H.D.: (233-235) [M. Rankin]; Jeffers (244) [J. Milne]; Moore (250) [S. Krukenberg]; Eliot (277) [E. Bevel]:

In Gioia, pp. 18-116.

**Harlem Renaissance:**

In Nelson, Hughes (502) [M. La Zier]: "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," "Christ in Alabama" and "Let America Be America Again."

In Gioia, pp. 146-151.

*Recommended:* In Nelson, Grimke (145); McKay (314) [J. Schroeder]: "America"; Toomer (352) [L. Roll]; Brown (473): "Memphis Blues"; Cullen (530): "Heritage."

*Listening:* WCW, "To Elsie" (168) and "The Red Wheelbarrow" (170); Pound, Canto XLV "With Usura" (handout); H.D., from *Helen in Egypt* (218; handout); Jeffers, "The Day Is a Poem (September 19, 1939)" (handout); Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (278); Hughes, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" and "The Weary Blues" (503-504).

T 13: Moore (250) [S. Krukenberg]

**Harlem Renaissance:**

In Nelson, Hughes (502) [M. La Zier]: "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," "Christ in Alabama" and "Let America Be America Again."

In Gioia, pp. 146-151.

**Modernist Alternatives:**

In Nelson, **Agrarians:** Ransom (312) [D. French]; Warren (575) [K. Mitchell]; and **Romantics:** Bogan [J. Milne] (378); Crane (384): from *The Bridge* [R. Pratte]; Bishop (631-638; 643-647) [L. Roll]; Hayden (691) [A. Crandell]: "Middle Passage"; Lowell (751) [A. Lenaghan]: "For the Union Dead."

In Gioia, pp. 117-139; 186-191.

*Recommended:* Tate (409); Berryman (721-728).

*Listening:* Ransom, "Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter" (312); Bogan, "The Dream" and "Song for the Last Act" (handouts); Bishop, "The Fish" (631) and "Crusoe in England" (643); Lowell, "Skunk Hour" (757); Berryman, from *The Dream Songs*, #4 (722) and #22 (723).

R 15: "What do we mean when we say *postmodern*?" (lecture)

**Open Form: Objectivists**

In Nelson, Reznikoff (354-364) [E. Bevel]; Niedecker (536-541) [J. Schroeder]: "Poet's work"; Rakosi (547) [L. Roll]; Zukofsky (551-556) [M. La Zier]: "A Song for the Year's End"; Oppen (603-607) [B. Bolin] "Image of the Engine."

In Gioia, pp. 152-158.

T 20: **Open Form: The Black Mountain School**

In Hoover, Olson (3-16) [D. French]: "I, Maximus of Gloucester, to You"; Duncan (29-38) [A. Lenaghan]: "Often I am Permitted to Return to a Meadow"; Levertov (86-92) [K. Mitchell] "The Wings" and "Williams: An Essay"; Creeley (143-155) [J. Milne]: "For Love" and "The Language."

In Gioia, pp. 172-181; 225-240; 276-279.

In Hoover, pp. 626-628; 638-640.

*Listening:* Duncan, "Often I am Permitted to Return to a Meadow" (785) and "Poetry, A Natural Thing" (handout); Levertov, "The Secret" and "Her Sadness" (handouts)

**Open Form: The San Francisco Renaissance**

In Hoover, Ferlinghetti (42-51) [A. Crandell]: "I Am Waiting"; Spicer (103-111) [R. Pratte]: from *Imaginary Elegies*.

In Gioia, pp. 159-171; 255-258.

*Recommended:* In Nelson, Rexroth (562); Everson (648); Kees (709). In Hoover, McClure (253).

R 22: **Open Form: The Beat Generation Poets**

In Hoover, Kerouac (75-80); Whalen (80-85); Ginsberg (130-138); Corso (208-213); Snyder (214-221); Di Prima (272-277); In Allen, Welch (206-216).

In Hoover, pp. 635-637.

T 27: **Divergences: New Regionalism, New Formalism and the Language poets**

In Nelson, Knight (968); Baraka (997); Oliver (1023); Harper (1043)

In Hoover, Eigner (161); Rothenberg (221); Antin (221); Kelly (301); Howe (346); Palmer (420); Davidson (439); Silliman (489)

R 29: **Post-War Formalism, Feminism and the Confessional Mode**

In Nelson, Wilbur (792); Kumin (821); Rich (934-945); Plath (973-987)

**Internationalism: Surrealism, Deep Image Poets and the New York School**

In Nelson, O'Hara (827-833); Bly (881); Wright (890); Ashbery (894-899); Kinnell (906); Merwin (912-917); Levine (925-933)

In Gioia, pp. 259-275; 280-295; 310-322.

*August*

T 3: Oral reports

R 5: Oral reports (if necessary)